

Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /079 W

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R 291500Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5600

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMCONSUL BELIZE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUNIGALPA

USUN 505

USNINCSO

PANCANAL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMANIAN VIEWS ON BELIZE-GUATEMALA DISPUTE
D1. OCT. 21 PANAMA MORNING NEWSPAPER "MATUTINO" CARRIED ON
EDITORIAL PAGE ARTICLE ENTITLED "EL CASO DE BELICE". "THE
BELIZE CASE" WAS AUTHORED BY RESPECTED COLUMNIST LUIS
RESTREPO. RESTREPO HAS ON OCCASIN USED HIS COLUMN TO
REFLECT OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POINTS OF VIEW ON A VARIETY
OF MATTERS. TENOR OF THIS ARTICLE AND PUBLICATION OF IT
SO NEAR TO OCT. 31 MEETING OF CA PRESIDENTS SUGGEST IT
REFLECTS COMMON FEELING ON BELIZE DISPUTE IN PANAMA.

2. MAJOR POINTS OF ARTICLE ARE:

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A. BELIZE IS GUATEMALAN TERRITORY. NINETEENTH

CENTURY ENGLISH PIRACY CREATED THE "FICTION" THAT IT IS NOT.

B. GUATEMALA HAS NEVER CEASED CLAIMING BELIZE AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ITS NATIONAL TERRITORY.

C. THE QUESTION OF BELIZE REPRESENTS A VERY IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN THE HEMISPHERE.

D. BRITAIN HAS KEPT BELIZE AS A "COLONY NAILED TO GUATEMALA'S HEART", MAINTAINING ITS IMPERIALIST POLICY OF THREE CENTURIES AGO. NOW THE DISPUTE ARISES ANEW AS AN ISSUE OF CONFLICT IN LATIN AMERICA. GUATEMALA IS PREPARED TO MAKE ANY SACRIFICES TO REGAIN WHAT IS LEGITIMATELY ITS OWN.

E. THE PEOPLES OF LATIN AMERICA WILL BE WITH GUATEMALA IN ITS JUST STRUGGLE: "BELIZE BELINGS TO GUATEMALA JUST AS THE ISLAS MALVINAS BELONG TO ARGENTINA, JUST AS THE CANAL ZONE IS PANAMANINA TERRITORY".

COMMENT: RESTREPO'S ARTICLE PRESENTS A COMMON, WIDELY-HELD POINT OF VIEW IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA OF THE ORIGINS OF THE BELIZE-GUATEMALA DISPUTE AND THE LEGALITY OF WHO OWNS WHAT THERE. AS TO SOLUTION OF THE ISSUE, OTHER THAN EXPRESS HIS FRATERNAL SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA, RESTREPO SUGGESTED NONE.

3. PANAMA'S UN PERMREP AQUILINO BOYD TOLD EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR OCT. 27 THAT ON BELIZE GOP WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN PRESSURES FROM ITS FRIEND GUATEMALA ON THE ONE HAND AND THE CARIBBEAN STATES ON THE OTHER. PANAMA'S OFFICIAL POSITION ON SELF-DETERMINATION, HE ADDED, FAVORED INDEPENDENCE FOR BELIZE. HE SAID THAT TORRIJOS' PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED VISIT TO GUATEMALA WAS NOW IN DOUBT AND THE ACTING FONMIN CARLOS OZORES WOULD PROBABLY GO INSTEAD. BOYD GAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE GOP HAS TAKEN A DECISION ON THE BELIZE QUESTION.

COMMENT: FACED WITH SUCH EVIDENCE OF GOP INDECISION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMBASSY LEERY OF PREDICTION. WE FEEL, NONETHELESS, THAT WHILE PANAMA WILL PROBABLY SIGN WHATEVER JOINT RESOLUTION THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS DRAFT IN THEIR GUATEMALA MEETING, IN PRIVATE PANAMA WILL URGE A PEACEFUL, MEDIATED SOLUTION--BUT ONE FACORABLE TO GUATEMALA.

JORDEN

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